

## WHEN DID PETER THE GREAT ORDER BEARDS SHAVED?\* \*\*

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At first glance, the question of the exact date of the beard shaving decree might seem insignificant or too narrow. In reality, however, this tiny issue could play an important role in discussions of how Russia was transformed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Oddly enough, there is no consensus on the date when Peter ordered his subjects to shave their beards in scholarly literature. The author of this article summarises all the available sources on this subject, both those previously used by historians and those he has uncovered, including documents from Peter's personal chancellery, the Privy Chancellery, the Moscow chancelleries and local authorities, as well as testimonies of contemporaries (Zhelyabuzhskii's diary, the autobiography of Prince Boris Kurakin, the diary of Johann Georg Korb, etc.). The author concludes that, on the one hand, the introduction of beard shaving was apparently conceived by Peter the Great during his Grand Embassy or immediately afterwards. On the other hand, considerable tangential evidence and financial accounts of the Moscow chancelleries confirm that a formal prohibition on wearing beards apparently had not existed before the decree of January 1705. Consequently, the author assumes that beard shaving was gradually introduced in Russia. Peter first planted the idea in the minds of members of the elite through playful shaving spectacles and personalised oral decrees, allowing its diffusion among ever widening circles of people. By the end of 1704, Peter might have concluded that his subjects were prepared for a legislative ban on maintaining a beard. Indeed, by the time Peter's famous 1705 decree was announced in Russian cities, many of his subjects had already parted with their facial hair, and they did so voluntarily.

*Keywords:* Peter the Great; the Petrine epoch; cultural reforms; beard shaving; power and society; everyday practices.

Вопрос о точной дате указа о бритье только на первый взгляд может показаться слишком узким и малозначительным. Ответ на этот частный

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вопрос может играть немаловажную роль в модели преобразования России конца XVII – первой четверти XVIII в. В научной литературе нет точного однозначного ответа на вопрос, когда Петр I указал своим подданным брить бороды. В статье обобщаются все имеющиеся на этот счет источники, как известные, так и вновь открытые: документы Кабинета Петра I, Ближней канцелярии, московских приказов и органов местного управления, а также свидетельства современников («дневные записки» Желябужского, автобиография князя Б. И. Куракина, дневник И. Корба др.). Показано, что, хотя введение брадобрития в России было задумано Петром I во время Великого посольства или сразу после него, многие косвенные данные и комплекс финансовых отчетов московских приказов позволяют уверенно утверждать, что формального всеобщего запрещения ношения бороды не существовало до знаменитого указа января 1705 г. Полученные данные позволили сделать вывод о постепенном характере введения брадобрития в петровской России. Оно насаждалось сначала в элитарной среде посредством шутовских брадобритий и персональных устных указов, а затем по цепочке распространялось и в более широких кругах. Возможно, к концу 1704 г. Петр I пришел к мысли о том, что его подданные уже достаточно подготовлены к запрещению ношения бород на уровне законодательства. Действительно, к моменту, когда в 1705 г. в российских городах был оглашен знаменитый указ Петра, многие его подданные уже успели расстаться со своими бородами, причем совершенно добровольно.

*Ключевые слова:* Петр Великий; Петровская эпоха; культурные реформы; брадобритие; власть и общество; повседневные практики.

The question posed in this article's title might surprise readers. Indeed, there is a massive amount of popular and academic literature on Peter the Great, and it is the rare historian who has ignored such landmark reforms as the shaving of beards and the transition from the traditional national mode of dress to the Western European style, which have become emblematic of the Petrine cultural revolution and Peter's reforms generally. Is it necessary to write a scholarly article about the date when Peter ordered his subjects to shave their beards when answering this question requires merely cracking open any book on Peter or grabbing a dusty old textbook from off the shelf?

Oddly enough, however, there is no consensus on the issue in the scholarly literature. Some historians, such as Nikolai Ustrialov, Sergei Solovyov, and Grigorii Esipov, agreed that the decree on beard shaving was issued immediately after Peter returned from his Grand Embassy in September 1698. They were not troubled by the fact that the first known decree on beard shaving dates only to 1705 [ПСЗ. Т. 4. № 2015]: they believed the original decree had simply not been found [Устрялов, т. 3, с. 195; Есипов, т. 2, с. 163, 174; Михневич, т. 2, 79; Винклер, с. 168; Чижев, с. 333–334; Руденко, Мицкевич, с. 44–46]. According to a second point of view, voiced by Evgeny Anisimov and Anatoly Shashkov, the first decree on beard shaving was promulgated in 1700, along with the famous decree on European dress of 4 January 1700 [ПСЗ. Т. 4. № 1741], while the decree issued on

16 January 1705 was merely a reiteration [Anisimov, p. 218–219; Шашков, с. 301]. Finally, there is a third scholarly opinion: that the 16 January 1705 decree was the first decree on beard shaving [Hughes, p. 24; Акельев, Трефилов, с. 156–157].

At first glance, the question of the exact date of the beard shaving decree might seem insignificant or rather narrow. In reality, however, this tiny issue could play an important role in discussions of how Russia was transformed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This is clearly illustrated by Solovyov's conception, according to which the Petrine reforms were a well-planned and thoroughly conceived programme for Europeanizing Russia. Solovyov argued that the introduction of beard shaving occupied a special place because it marked the beginning of the active phase of Europeanization. Returning from the Grand Embassy in late August 1698, Peter realized the rebellious *streltsy* (musketeers) were 'only an armed force, backed by a mass of people hostile to reform'. But Peter was 'ready to fight to the death; he [was] aroused, boiling; he would stop at nothing; he would attack, seize, and trample the banner of his enemies. This banner was the beard, this banner was the old long dress'. It was no accident that Peter launched the Europeanization of Russia by transforming the external appearance of his subjects. Solovyov explains it as follows: 'Man tries to express his state of mind, feelings, views, and aspirations mainly in his appearance, clothing, and hairstyle. Once the superiority of the foreigner and the duty to learn from him has been recognized, imitation immediately manifests itself, naturally and necessarily beginning with appearance, with clothing and hair dressing'. During the 'first movement towards the West' in the reign of Boris Godunov, Russians began imitating the outward appearance of Europeans. Beard shaving emerged then as well. This, however, provoked a reaction among adherents of the old ways against 'foreign, prodigal, and disgusting practices'. Thus, 'the beard was made a banner in the struggle between the two parties, and it [was] clear that when the party of the new won, its first act would be to bring down the enemy banner'. Hence, it was no accident that the Petrine reforms, aimed at Europeanizing Russian, had begun with beard shaving and exchanging the Russian manner of dress for the European dress. 'Entering the European arena, one naturally had to wear European dress as well, [since] it was a question of which family of nations to belong to, European or Asian, and, accordingly, of wearing the clothing and sign of this family' [Соловьев, т. 7, с. 549–550; т. 8, с. 100–101].



Countermarked beard tax token. 1705

If, however, we imagine the introduction of beard shaving in Russia dates not to 1698 but to 1705, the picture Solovyov paints cannot be historically accurate. Indeed, if Peter had ordered beards shaved after reforming the municipal administration, introducing a new calendar, reforming the army, founding St Petersburg, and effecting other changes, then perhaps beard shaving did not have such central significance for him? Perhaps he did not have such a principled, rigid attitude to the issue? Perhaps the Europeanization of his subjects' appearance was implemented not as abruptly as Solovyov imagined, but gradually, calmly, and carefully, in several stages?

In this article, I will try to answer the question of when exactly Peter the Great issued the decree on compulsory beard shaving for his subjects.

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First of all, I must define the chronological limits of my search. We can identify two dates that clearly demarcate the introduction of beard shaving in Russia. The first is 26 August 1698, the date of Peter's return from his Grand Embassy, when, according to a report made by the Austrian envoy Guarient and the diary of his secretary, Korb, the tsar personally cut the beards of the boyars who had come to greet him. Beard shaving could not have been introduced earlier than this date. There are several pieces of indirect evidence that corroborate this. One of them is found in the case of Abbot Avraamii of the Andreevsky Monastery.

In late December 1696 or early January 1697, Abbot Avraamii sent Peter the Great a letter in which he criticized the autocrat's actions. After reading it, the tsar ordered Avraamii's immediate arrest. The investigation, conducted at the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery from January to March 1697, revealed that Avraamii's text had been inspired by conversations with friends and acquaintances who had visited him in his monastery cell. Several of them – clerks Ignatii Bubnov, Nikifor Krenev, and Kuzma Rudnev, and peasants Ivan and Roman Pososkhov – were arrested. The investigation concluded the men had criticized the tsar for 'obscene amusements', 'jokes and deeds displeasing to God... which he ought to forbid his subjects, but which he perpetrates himself',<sup>1</sup> unfair trials, bribery and red tape in the chancelleries, and the fact that the tsar had become 'immensely stubborn', did not heed or take any 'good advice' from his mother, wife, confessor, and others, and did not 'deign to live' in his palace in Moscow. It is worth noting, however, that neither Avraamii's letter nor the case files contain any mention of beard shaving and replacing Russian dress with European clothing [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 2. Стб. 484. Л. 4–34; Бакланова, с. 145–146; Голикова, 1957, с. 77–86; Cracraft, p. 19–20].

We must now identify the second date that will help us establish the period during which beard shaving was introduced in Russia. The first known decree on beard shaving is dated 16 January 1705. (I have been unable to

<sup>1</sup> Avraamii had in mind Peter's Unholy Council (for more details, see: [Zitser]).

find any earlier decree among the documents of Peter the Great's personal chancellery and the other chancelleries or in the books of decrees). This decree proclaims:

На Москве и во всех городах царедворцам, и дворовым, и городовым, и приказным всяких чинов служивым людям, и гостям, и гостинной сотни, и черных слобод посадским людям всем сказать, чтоб впредь с сего его великого государя указа бороды и усы брили. А буде кто бород и усов брить не похотят, а похотят ходить с бородами и с усами, и с тех имать с царедворцов, и с дворовых, и с городских, и всяких чинов служилых и приказных людей по 60 рублей с человека, с гостей и с гостинной сотни первыя статьи по 100 рублей с человека, средней и меньшей статьи, которые платят десятыя деньги меньше 100 рублей, с торговых, и посадских людей по 60 рублей, третья статья, с посадских же, и с боярских людей, и с ямщиков, и с извозчиков, и с церковных причетников, кроме попов и дьяконов, и всяких чинов с московских жителей по 30 рублей с человека на год. И давать им из Приказа земских дел знаки, а для тех знаков и для записки приходить им в Приказ земских дел без мотчания, а в городах в приказныя избы, а те знаки носить им на себе. И в Приказе земских дел, и в городах, в приказных избах учинить тому записныя и приходныя книги. А с крестьян имать везде по воротам пошлину по 2 деньги с бороды по вся дни, как ни пойдут в город и за город, а без пошлин крестьян в воротах, в город и за город, отнюдь не пропускать. И о том для ведома по воротам с сего великаго государя указу прибить письма, а в города воеводам послать его великаго государя грамоты. <...>. А буде кто из царедворцов, и из градских, и из приказных, и из посадских людей похочет ходить с бородою, и ему бдля взятъя знака ехать к Москве и явиться в Приказе земских дел. А в Сибирские и в Поморские городаы знаки послать с Москвы [ПСЗ. Т. 4. № 2015]<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Henceforth, with this the great sovereign's decree, all courtiers, officials, military servicemen, chancellery clerks, the *gosti*, members of the *Gostinaia sotnia*, and all townsmen in Moscow and all the other towns are to shave beards and mustaches. If some do not wish to shave beards and mustaches, and wish to go about in beards and mustaches, they are to be taxed yearly: courtiers, officials, and all ranks of military servicemen and chancellery clerks, 60 rubles per person; the *gosti* and members of the *Gostinaia sotnia* of the first rank, 100 rubles per person; members of the *Gostinaia sotnia* of the middle and low ranks who pay a tenth money [*desiatyia dengi*, an irregular military tax] of less than 100 rubles, traders and townsmen, 60 rubles per person; third-rank townsmen, boyars' servants, coachmen, cab drivers, and clergymen, except priests and deacons, and all ranks of Moscow residents, 30 rubles per person. The Moscow Police Chancellery is to give such persons a token in receipt, as will the chancellery houses in the other towns, which tokens they must wear. In the Moscow Police Chancellery and the chancellery houses, registry and payment books should be made for this purpose. As for peasants, let a toll of two dengas per beard be collected at the town gates each time they enter or leave town, and henceforth do not let peasants pass through town gates, coming or going, without paying this toll. This the great sovereign's decree should be sent to all the military governors [*voevody*] and nailed on the gates of the towns. <...> Those courtiers, officials, chancellery clerks, and townsmen who wish to go about in a beard should come to Moscow to the Police Chancellery to obtain a token. And tokens should be sent from Moscow to the Siberian and White Sea towns.

Was the decree enforced? The answer is definitely yes. Thus, the decree on beard shaving was sent from the Moscow Police Chancellery to the town of Ryazhsk on 10 February 1705. A confirmation decree was sent there on 3 March 1705, and received on 20 March 1705. It ordered that the decree be announced 'on many trading days by heralds', nailed to the town gates, and entered into the book of decrees in the chancellery house, and that the military governors have it in front of them on their desks so that it should never be forgotten [РГАДА. Ф. 1154. Оп. 1. Д. 29. Л. 1–1 об.]. On 12 February 1705, the Moscow Police Chancellery sent the decree on beard shaving to the Siberian Chancellery [РГАДА. Ф. 214. Оп. 5. Д. 859. Л. 10 об.; РГАДА. Ф. 199. Оп. 1. Портф. 133. Ч. 4. Л. 185, 215; Памятники Сибирской истории XVIII века, с. 273]. From there, the decree was distributed to Siberian cities and towns. On 18 April 1705, the decree, instructions, and 5,000 beard tokens were delivered to Tobol'sk. The decrees and tokens were then sent to even farther-flung Siberian towns. Hence the decrees on beard shaving and German clothing were delivered to Tara on 17 May 1705 [РГАДА. Ф. 649. Оп. 1. Д. 1. Л. 4; Ф. 158. Оп. 1. Д. 130. Л. 1–1 об.]. The decree and 500 beard tokens were received in Eniseisk on 28 July 1705 [РГАДА. Ф. 199. Оп. 1. Портф. 133. Ч. 4. Л. 215–216; Памятники Сибирской истории XVIII века, с. 273–276]. In Tomsk, the decrees were received on 16 September 1705 [Шашков, с. 311], and the decree and 400 copper beard tokens arrived in Irkutsk only on 2 October 1705 [РГАДА. Ф. 214. Оп. 5. Д. 859. Л. 10 об.– 11].

The cases investigated by the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery also eloquently point to the fact that the decree was implemented everywhere. Thus, on 19 April 1705, in the Trinity-Sergius Monastery village of Dubrovo in the Murom district, monastery servant Yakov Gnusin was shaving his beard while peasants were making feed for cattle. Looking at Gnusin, Boris Petrov said, 'I would behead the man who ordered beards shaved!' To which Gnusin replied, 'Are you in your right mind? Why do speak so? God deigned it, and the sovereign has decreed that beards be shaved' [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 1. Д. 305. Л. 7–7 об.]. In July 1705, the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery investigated the case of Denis Semenov, peasant elder on the estate of *stolnik* Egor Yanov in the village of Malye Gorki in the Kostroma district. While he was in the landlord's yard 'before Trinity Sunday' (which fell on May 27 in 1705), Semenov said, 'Many of our peasants have been to Moscow, and their breads have all been shaved. But I do not wish to live if my beard is shaved' [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 1. Д. 325. Л. 4 об.].

In addition, there is plenty of evidence of negative reactions to the decree's enforcement among the populace of Siberia and the Volga region. Thus, the decree arrived in the Siberian town of Tara on 17 May 1705. The military governor, *stolnik* Mitrofan Vorontsov-Vel'iaminov, proclaimed it in public places on several occasions, but the townspeople and district residents refused to obey it. On 5 June 1705, 500 Tara Cossacks and lesser nobles (*deti boiarskie*) came to the chancellery house to declare they would not shave their mustaches and beards and would not change their dress



[РГАДА. Ф. 158. Оп. 1. Д. 130; РГАДА. Ф. 649. Оп. 1. Д. 1; Покровский, с. 49–50]. Residents of Tomsk likewise refused to comply with the decree [Шашков, с. 301–322]. But the supreme manifestation of discontent with the beard shaving decree was the Astrakhan Revolt of 1705–1706 [Голикова, 1975; Akelev, p. 263–266].

There is no doubt, then, that the 1705 beard shaving decree, as published in the *Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire*, was indeed circulated to all the towns and enforced. But should we deem 1705 the year when Peter introduced beard shaving in Russia? Or had a general decree appeared earlier, sometime between 1698 and 1704?

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It is well known that the introduction of beard shaving was only one of a package of measures aimed at Europeanizing the external appearance of Russian subjects. Replacing traditional Russian dress with Western European clothing was another component [Кирсанова; Hughes, 2001; Шамин, 23–38]. The first decree on wearing Western European clothing is well known. Published in the *Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire* and dated 4 January 1700, it states:

Бояром, и окольничим, и думным ближним людям, и стольником, и стряпчим, и дворяном московским, и дьяком, и жильцом, и всех чинов служилым, и приказным, и торговым людям, и людям боярским, на Москве и на городех носить платья, венгерские кафтаны – верхние длиною по подвязку, а исподние короче верхних тем же подобием. И то платье, кто успеет сделать, носить с Богоявления дни нынешнего 1700 года, а кто к тому дни сделать не успеет, и тем делать и носить, кончая с нынешния Сырныя недели [ПСЗ. Т. 4. № 1741]<sup>3</sup>.

Anisimov has suggested that ‘apparently at that time [i.e., in early 1700], too, the decree came out about shaving beards to the cited categories of the population [i.e., those mentioned in the decree on western dress]. A second degree [on beard shaving] appeared on 16 January 1705’ [Anisimov, p. 218–219]. Shaskov shared Anisimov’s opinion [Шашков, с. 301]. *The History of the Swedish War* also seemingly points to the simultaneous adoption of decrees on wearing European dress and beard shaving in 1700. Between accounts of the founding of the Order of St. Andrew and the introduction of the new calendar, the latest edition of the *History* (compiled, apparently, in 1726) contains the following passage:

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<sup>3</sup> Boyars, lords-in-waiting, privy councilors, table attendants, crown agents, Moscow nobles, crown secretaries, court attendants, servitors and chancellery men of all ranks, trading folk, and boyar men in Moscow and other towns shall wear dress, Hungarian caftans, the upper garments down to the garter, and the lower garments, shorter than the upper, in the same fashion; and those who succeed in making this dress shall wear it from Epiphany of this year 1700, and those who do not succeed by this day shall make and wear it by this Shrovetide.

Тогда ж заблагоразсудил старинное платье российское (которое было наподобие полского платья) отменить, а повелел всем своим подданным носить по обычаю европейских христианских государств, такожде и бороды повелел брить [Гистория Свейской войны, т. 1, с. 201].<sup>4</sup>

This passage, composed between 1722 and 1723, and later repeatedly edited, shows that the compilers of the *History* regarded both measures, the introduction of European dress and beard shaving, as having been adopted at the same time as the new calendar at the turn of 1699 and 1700 [Акельев, с. 93–97].

But do other records from 1700 corroborate this view?

The 1700 decree on wearing Hungarian caftans, naturally, caused serious concern among the populace. We know, for example, that as early as mid-1699, information that the decree was in the works was leaked from the Moscow chancelleries and provoked great public interest. We find the following entry for July 1699 in Zheliabuzhskii's diary:

Да явился было указ о французском платье, и тот указ многие списывали, и с тем указом многих ловили и на Потешный двор водили и расспрашивали: где они такой взяли и у кого списывали? [Желябужский, с. 317–318].<sup>5</sup>

In one copy of Zheliabuzhskii's diary, this entry contains a curious continuation, which for some reason had been crossed out in the manuscript and hence was not included in the other copies, on which the published version was based:

...И по тем роспросам дошло Помесного приказу до подъячего Семена Жукова, что списки явились от него для того, что ему было велено о том платье учинить выписку в доклад, а явился тот указ в народ прежде доклада. И за то ему, Семену Жукову, учинено наказанья – бит кнутом нещадно [РГАДА. Ф. 181. Оп. 2. Д. 125. Л. 455 об.– 456].<sup>6</sup>

This entry shows that the 1700 decree on European dress was so remarkable that information about it had spread around Moscow in July 1699 even as it was still being drafted in the Moscow Kremlin. Service Land Chancellery clerk Semen Leont'evich Zhukov [Веселовский, с. 186; Демидова, с. 198–199], who had been entrusted with making an excerpt for a report

<sup>4</sup> It was then that [Peter] deigned to abolish the old-fashioned Russian dress (which was like the Polish dress) and ordered all his subjects to dress in the manner of the European Christian countries, as well as ordering [them] to shave [their] beards.

<sup>5</sup> There had appeared a decree on French dress, and many people copied that decree, and many were caught with this decree and taken to the Mock Court [*Poteshnyi dvor*] and questioned where they had got it and from whom they had copied it.

<sup>6</sup> And these inquiries led to Semen Zhukov, a clerk of the Service Land Chancellery. The copies had come from him, because he had been ordered to make an excerpt for a report about [the decree on] dress, but the decree had been made public before the report. For which Semen Zhukov was punished with a merciless whipping.



on the decree, could not help sharing information about the decree with colleagues and acquaintances. Consequently, copies of the decree quickly spread through Moscow, triggering a criminal investigation whose records I have not been able to find, unfortunately.

When the decree was published, it provoked a lively discussion, which could not but lead to many incautious statements and, as a consequence, a number of political investigations and trials. Thus, on 15 February 1700, three local clergymen in the Shal'sk parish of the Olonets district – priest Ivan Rodionov, deacon Dmitrii Maksimov, and sexton Efrem Kirilov – discussed the latest news in the refectory after a church service. We can reconstruct their conversation, as based on their confessions of guilt (*povinnnye chelobitnye*), as follows:

*Дьячок Ефрем Кирилов:* ‘изволил наш великий государь летопись писать от Рожества Христова тысяча семсотого году, да платье носить на Москве венгерское’.

*Священник Иван Родионов:* ‘слышал я ныне в волости от проезжих людей, будто государь изволил убавить великого поста неделю, а после Святых Пасхи в среду и пятки мясо и млеко ясти во весь год’.

*Дьячок Ефрем Кирилов:* ‘как де будут такие его, великого государя, указы присланы к нам в погосты, и будут люди по лесам жить и гореть, я де пойду с ними жить и гореть туды же, а в среду и в пятки мяса ясти не стану’.

*Священник Иван Родионов:* ‘возми де и меня с собою туды же жить и гореть, а у церкви Божиих служить не буду: знать то, что ныне житие к концу приходит’.

*Дьякон Дмитрий Максимов:* ‘государь будто иное без ума шавит’ [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 2. Стб. 817. Л. 32–36]<sup>7</sup>.

The decree on Hungarian dress was also being discussed in Smolensk at this time. Ivan Matveev, a clerk in the Smolensk Chancellery Chamber, came home and told his folk the latest news: ‘A decree of the great sovereign has been rendered in Moscow: every rank has been ordered to wear Hungarian dress’. Upon hearing this, his relative Matrena Fedorova said: ‘That is not the tsar. When in Moscow the great tsarina gave birth to the tsarevna, a girl, the girl tsarevna was stolen and switched with him who is now Tsar Petr Alekseevich. And he is not the tsar; he is of German stock. Because

<sup>7</sup> *Deacon Efrem Kirilov:* ‘Our great sovereign has deigned to count the years from the Year of Our Lord seventeen hundred and to wear Hungarian dress in Moscow’.

*Priest Ivan Rodionov:* ‘I have heard now in the volost from travelers that the sovereign has deigned to shorten Lent by a week, and after Easter [to allow] eating of meat and milk on Wednesdays and Fridays the year round’.

*Deacon Efrem Kirilov:* ‘If such decrees of the great sovereign are sent to our parishes, and people begin living and burning themselves in the forests, I will go there as well to live and burn with them, but I will not eat meat on Friday’.

*Priest Ivan Rodionov:* ‘Take me there with you to live and burn, because I will not serve in God’s church: it seems as if life is coming to an end’.

*Deacon Dmitrii Maksimov:* ‘The sovereign does sometimes seem to blather thoughtlessly’.

he is not the tsar, he is replacing the Russian dress' [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 2. Стб. 822. Л. 1–2; Ф. 6. Оп. 1. Д. 14].

From these and other cases handled by the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery in 1700–01, it follows that the 1700 decree on Hungarian dress caused serious concern among the Russian populace and was vigorously discussed in many Russian towns [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 2. Стб. 819; Стб. 884; Стб. 934; Стб. 1021]. However, we find no mention of beard shaving decrees in these case files and certain other sources. Thus, among the records of Peter the Great's personal chancellery is preserved a letter to the tsar from *pribyl'shchik* (seeker of new revenues) A. A. Kurbatov, dated 20 March 1700, in which Kurbatov writes:

В состоятельных твоих государевых именных указах о кафтанах венгерских и о прменении ножей и о протчих народи во исполнении того якобы ослабевают, чают тому быть по-прежнему. И ежели в воли твоей государевой положися, что тем указам быть впредь нерушимо состоятельным, благоволи, государь, чрез самодержавное твое повеление те состоявшиеся указы подновить вторично, хотя, государь, под видом и страха, дабы и впредь именных твоих государевых указов в скором исполнении не пренебрегали [РГАДА. Ф. 9. Оп. 2. Отд. 2. Кн. 1. Л. 103].<sup>8</sup>

We should note that Kurbatov makes no mention of the beard shaving decree in this letter, either. We would imagine that had the beard shaving decree been promulgated along with the decree on Hungarian caftans, rumors about it would certainly have quickly spread around Russia, and this would definitely have been reflected in the records of political trials and other sources. However, in 1700, nothing was known about the beard shaving decree in the Shal'sk parish of the Olonets district or Smolensk or even in Moscow.

Unfortunately, however, the issue raised in the title of this article cannot be regarded as finally solved at this point. After analyzing a great number of case files from the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery, Esipov concluded that 'these cases... confirm the assumption that a general order on beard shaving existed earlier than 1705' [Есипов, с. 174]. After studying the entire corpus of documents from the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery for the period 1698–1705, I can confirm that Esipov's conclusion is not ungrounded.

In 1703, the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery investigated a case involving monks, from the Simonov Monastery in Moscow, who were suspected of promoting texts on the prohibition against beard shaving. The investigation found that Petr Konarkhist, cell attendant of the monastery's abbot, had in December 1702 personally compiled a miscellany of 'sundry edifying

<sup>8</sup> The people have been feeble, as it were, in executing your sovereign personal decrees on Hungarian caftans and the use of knives and other matters, wishing things to be as they were. And if it is your sovereign will that these decrees be inviolably fulfilled, deign, sire, that by your autocratic command these same decrees should be renewed again, albeit, sire, under threat of punishment and lest in future the swift execution of your personal sovereign decrees be neglected.

things... to be read to cure gloom'. He included an article on the prohibition against beard shaving excerpted from a printed edition of the Kormchaia Book he had taken from the abbot's cell. Before Christmas, Konarkhist gave the unbound miscellany to Hierodeacon Iessei Shosh to correct according to the rules, 'one article after another, as decently as possible' and write 'a laudatory preface'. Several days later, Shosh heard a conversation between Hierodeacon Irinarkh, the monastery's librarian, and the monastery's former treasurer Feodosii in the monastery refectory. Feodosii asked Irinarkh to find him a copy of the Kormchaia Book with the prohibition against beard shaving. The monk explained he was interested because the monks and laymen who came to him for confession often confessed to the sin of beard shaving. He needed to find out what rule applied to such transgressions. The librarian replied by giving a wave of his hand and saying: 'It's not a matter for nowadays!' Hearing this conversation, Iessei approached Feodosii and told him he had such a book. Feodosii asked him to bring it to his cell. The same evening, Iessei brought the book to Feodosii's cell and showed him the article, excerpted from the Kormchaia Book, containing the prohibition against beard shaving. According to Iessei, Feodosii asked him to allow him to copy this text, but he would not do this, explaining: 'Nowadays beards are shaved by the sovereign's decree and thus he would not venture to let Feodosii copy it' [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 1. Ч. 1. Д. 42. Л. 2, 4-4 об., 6 об.]. In another of his testimonies, Iessei, while trying to explain exactly when the conversation between Feodosii and the librarian had taken place, once again mentioned the beard shaving decree:

...в прошлом де 1702 году перед Рождеством Христовым, а в котором месяце и числе, не упомнит, после того, как симоновским слугам почали брить бороды, а по какому указу, не ведает [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 1. Ч. 1. Д. 42. Л. 8 об.].<sup>9</sup>

Note that Iessei learned about the beard shaving decree because in December 1702, before Christmas, the monastery servants, who guarded the monastery and the convicts who were held there, began to have their beards shaved. The monk knew no further details regarding this decree.

In addition to mentioning the beard shaving decree, this case is also noteworthy because of the way Prince Fedor Romodanovskii, head of the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery, reacted to it. When explaining why he had excerpted the prohibition against beard shaving, Konarkhist was forced by Romodanovskii to answer the following questions. Had he spoken to anyone about the prohibition against beard shaving by way of reproaching him? Had he ordered anyone to copy out the prohibition? Had he intended to publish the article and rebuke beard shavers? [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 1. Ч. 1. Д. 42. Л. 4 об.]. In October 1703, Iessei Shosh and Konarkhist

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<sup>9</sup> [It was] in the previous year, 1702, before Christmas, but in which month and at what date, he does not remember; [it was] after they had begun shaving the beards of the Simonov [monastery] servants, but upon what decree, he does not know.

were defrocked in preparation for torture and given the lay names Prokofei and Ivan; in November 1703, they were tortured on three occasions. Investigators attempted to find out what to what end and at whose insistence Prokofei had excerpted articles from the Kormchaia Book in his miscellany [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 1. Ч. 1. Д. 42. Л. 26–27]. Prince Romodanovskii thus saw the danger that the text could be used to undermine the state's authority. He suspected Konarkhist of having published the prohibition in order to rebuke people who were now shaving their breads, as well as of conspiring with other malefactors.

Prince Romodanovskii harbored similar suspicions towards Nizhny Novgorod barge hauler (*burlak*) Andrei Ivanov, who in December 1704 arrived in Moscow and announced that he had come on a matter of great importance to the tsar. At the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery, Ivanov declared he had come to tell the tsar that he was acting wrongly by destroying the Christian faith and ordering the shaving of beards, the wearing of German dress, and the use of tobacco. Beard shaving, said Ivanov, was addressed in the Sobornoe Ulozhenie (the 1649 legal code), where it was also written, allegedly, that anyone who wore foreign (*inozemskoe*) dress would be condemned, although Ivanov did not know where exactly this had been written because he was illiterate. In the olden days, anyone who used tobacco was punished by having his nose cut, he said. Ivanov had no acquaintances in Moscow, and no one had sent him to deliver this message to the tsar. He had come on his own because many townsmen were 'shaving [their] beards, wearing German dress, and using tobacco' in Nizhny Novgorod as well, and he had to come so that the tsar would order everything changed. Aside from this, Ivanov had no other business with the tsar. Ivanov was tortured at the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery and asked who his co-conspirators were. Who had sent him to Moscow and urged him to denounce the tsar? After being tortured, Ivanov died at the chancellery [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 1. Ч. 1. Д. 245. Л. 1–2 об.].

Prince Romodanovskii's tough response in these cases could not be accidental. There is evidence that incidents of public protests against the widespread practice of beard shaving did indeed take place in Russia between 1699 and 1704. Authorities regarded these protests as extreme manifestations of disloyalty to the tsar.

In 1700, the Military Chancellery (*Razriadnyi prikaz*) investigated the posting of several leaflets against beard shaving in public places. The first such leaflet was discovered, posted on a cross, seven miles from Trinity-Sergius Monastery on the road to Moscow, on 27 May 1700. On 1 June 1700 and 18 June 1700, respectively, identical leaflets were discovered on the gates of the Michael the Archangel Monastery in Yuryev-Polsky and the town of Suzdal [РГАДА. Ф. 210. Оп. 13. Стб. 1741. Л. 1–2, 6–7, 21]. Unfortunately, the leaflet itself has not been preserved in the case files. We know it was sent to the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery on 11 August 1700, but a search for the case file among the chancellery's records has proved fruitless. Nevertheless, we can get some sense of the leaflet's contents on the basis

of indirect evidence. When the leaflet found on 18 June 1700 was brought to military governor Vasilii Islen'ev at the Suzdal chancellery house, he ordered it read aloud. During the reading, Fedor Mikhailov, a clerk at the chancellery house, suddenly exclaimed: 'The bishop and archbishop of Tver were also going to announce the same!' When interrogated, the clerk testified that several years before he had heard from treasurer Iona Vologotskii that the metropolitan of Suzdal had urged the bishops to go to the tsar and plead (*bit' chelom*) with him 'not to shave beards' [РГАДА. Ф. 210. Оп. 13. Стб. 1741. Л. 37–38]. It is clear that the leaflet also called for a similar plea to the tsar 'not to shave beards'. Most likely, this appeal was addressed to military servicemen, and hence the Military Chancellery conducted the investigation.

As we can see, case files from political criminal investigations and trials during the period 1700–04 testify to the fact that the practice of beard shaving was spreading, and that a segment of the populace reacted adversely to it. And yet it would seem the same case files from the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery during the period 1698–1704 show no evidence of the forcible introduction of beard shaving through decrees, fines, and prosecutions, as we see in many cases from 1705. To confirm this, I will examine one more such case.

In July 1701, the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery investigated a case submitted from the town of Romanov on 30 March 1701. The incident had taken place during Easter Week 1700. Vikula Fedorov, a priest at the Trinity Church, had been making the rounds of houses with icons and performing prayer services. It was then that he performed prayers at the house of his spiritual son, the soldier Parfenka Nikiforov, son of Kokorev. The soldier was beardless: as Nikiforov explained, he had begun shaving his beard while serving in the army outside of Azov [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 2. Стб. 920. Л. 2, 16]. When those present at the service came to kiss the cross, Fedorov and Nikiforov had an interesting exchange, which can be reconstructed in detail by comparing the testimonies of the defendants and witnesses in the case. Fedorov rebuked his spiritual child: 'Why have you shaven your beard? You should have better asked me, because you are my spiritual son' (it is important to note that the priest himself admitted to saying this, and the witnesses confirmed it) [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 2. Стб. 920. Л. 12–15]. Nikiforov attempted to justify himself: 'The boyars and princes in Moscow now shave [their] beards, because the great sovereign so deigned it' [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 2. Стб. 920. Л. 16]. One witness conveyed Nikiforov's reply slightly differently: 'The sovereign does not now forbid us to shave [our] beards' [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 2. Стб. 920. Л. 12]. Nikiforov claimed that Fedorov responded by calling him an enemy and infidel (*basurmanin*), and saying something offensive about the tsar: 'What a mind the great sovereign has. He is a madman like you are'. But the witnesses did not corroborate the claim that Fedorov had made offensive remarks about the tsar, and later, at the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery, Nikiforov himself confessed he had defamed the priest because he had been drunk [РГАДА. Ф. 371.

Оп. 2. Стб. 920. Л. 16]. The judgment in the case was even more curious. On 31 July 1701, after listening to the particulars of the case, Prince Romodanovskii ordered the slanderer Nikiforov sent to the Military Chancellery for reassignment to the service and Fedorov released from the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery and given a letter vouchsafing his freedom [РГАДА. Ф. 371. Оп. 2. Стб. 920. Л. 29]. This case clearly shows there was still no general ban on wearing beards in 1701. Otherwise, a priest who had rebuked his spiritual charge for beard shaving would have not gone unpunished and been released so easily from the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery on Prince Romodanovskii's personal order.

The following picture thus emerges from the cases investigated by the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery between 1699 and 1704. There is no evidence there was a general ban on beard shaving during the period. At the same time, however, these same cases indicate that the practice of beard shaving was widespread in Russia at the time. People encountered shaven men more and more often. Thus, soldier Parfenka Nikiforov, who had returned from military service outside Azov to the town of Romanov in 1701, had taken up the habit of shaving during his time in the army. In 1702, a number of laymen and even monks confessed the sin of beard shaving to an elder at the Simonov Monastery in Moscow. In Nizhny Novgorod in 1704, many townsmen were 'shaving [their] beards, wearing German dress, and using tobacco'. Rumors that 'boyars and princes in Moscow now shave [their] beards', the 'great sovereign so deigned it' and 'does not now forbid us to shave' had penetrated the most remote corners of Muscovy.

Scholars have long noted that the fashion for beard shaving had begun to spread through Russia well before Peter's reforms. For example, according to *The Life of the Archpriest Avvakum by Himself*, in 1648, Avvakum rebuked Matvei, son of boyar Vasilii Sheremetev and a future famous military governor who then held the rank of cup-bearer (*chashechnik*), for beard shaving [Житие протопопа Аввакума, с. 62]. This example shows that beard shaving was even then fashionable among young noblemen. Shamin reasonably assumes that Tsar Fedor Alekseevich was quite sympathetic to beard shaving [Шамин, с. 34]. Indeed, the fashion for beard shaving among Russian courtiers in the 1680s and 1690s is borne out by contemporary portraits (*parsuny*), in which beards are almost absent, but a number of people quite close to the throne are portrayed with bare, clean-shaven chins [Русский исторический портрет. Эпоха парсуны]. The fashion for beard shaving was, apparently, so widespread among townspeople by the 1690s that Patriarch Adrian was compelled to appeal to the flock to stop shaving their beards [Есипов, прил., с. 64–72]. But in the years 1698–1704 the process was, seemingly, significantly accelerated thanks to Peter the Great.

It is well known that immediately after returning from the Grand Embassy, the tsar began forcibly depriving top officials of their beards. Peter either shaved the boyars' beards himself or ordered jesters and barbers to do it. Diplomatic dispatches by Christoph Ignaz von Guarient, Imperial ambassador, and the diary of his secretary, Johann Korb, attest that im-



mediately after returning from the Grand Embassy in August 1698, the tsar began forcibly removing the beards of state officials [Устрялов, т. 3, с. 621–623; Korb, p. 155–157]. Forcible beard shaving subsequently became a regular feature of Peter's court. Thus, describing the New Year's celebrations on 1 September 1698, Korb remarks: 'Nor could the irksome offices of the barber check the festivities of the day, though it was well known he was enacting the part of jester by appointment at the Czar's court. It was of evil omen to make show of reluctance as the razor approached the chin, and was to be forthwith punished with a boxing on the ears. In this way, between mirth and the wine-cup, many were admonished by this insane ridicule to abandon the olden guise' [Korb, p. 160]. Visiting Moscow in 1702, Cornelis de Bruyn mentioned the same thing: the tsar's barbers could cut off anyone's beard at the tsar's table and anywhere else [Де Бруин, с. 92].

So, gradually there were fewer and fewer bearded faces among Peter's retinue. But should we imagine that all these forcible beard shavings at court testify to the fact that the beard shaving decree had already been issued in 1698? Many historians have answered this question in the affirmative. For example, Sergei Chizhov writes, 'it should be admitted that the reform occurred immediately after the tsar's return from his voyage, that is, in September 1698, and the beard shaving reform, in particular, occurred earlier than the dress reform, not vice versa, as might have been supposed when considering the decrees included in the *Collection of Laws*' [Чижов, с. 333].

In 1871, Esipov found a document among the archives of the Armory Chamber that seemingly corroborated this hypothesis. The copy of a personal decree by Peter the Great reads as follows:

В нынешнем в 207-м году октября в ... день великий государь, царь и великий князь Петр Алексеевич, всеа Великия и Малыя и Белья России самодержец, указал по имянному своему, великого государя, указу в Серебряной полате сделать ис красной меди пятнатцать тысяч девять сот три чеха, а на них на одной стороне бородажные признаки, а на другой стороне напечатаны слова: 'двести седмой год'. А, сделав те чехи, отослать в Преображенской приказ во ближнему столнику князю Федору Юрьевичу Ромодановскому с товарищи. А что на дело тех чехов, на медь и мастеровым людям на кормовую дачу и на всякие припасы денег изойдет, и те денги взять ис Преображенского приказу [РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 1. Д. 33560. Л. 1; Сборник выписок из архивных бумаг о Петре Великом, т. 1, с. 166; Деммени, с. 5; Руденко, с. 19]<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> On the ... day of October of this year [7]207, the great sovereign, tsar and grand duke Petr Alekseevich, autocrat of All the Russias, Great and Little and White, has issued a personal sovereign decree to make fifteen thousand nine hundred and three cheques [*cheki*] from copper in the Silver Chamber; there should be beard signs on one side of them, and on the other, the words "year two hundred and seven" should be printed. After the cheques are made, they should be sent to the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery to the *stolnik* Prince Fedor Iur'evich Romodanovskii and company. And all the money for making the cheques, for copper, for victuals for the workmen, and other supplies should be taken from the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery.

As the text makes clear, the decree deals with the manufacture of 15,903 copper tokens, with 'beard signs' stamped on one side and the phrase 'year two hundred and seven' on the other. The State Hermitage Museum has the only extant specimen of the 1698/1699 beard token. Its authenticity is debatable, but it closely resembles the 'cheques' described in the decree [Чижов, с. 336–337; Деммени, с. 4–5; Руденко, с. 15–16, 102–103]. Based on this evidence, Chizhov concludes that the 'reform of beards and dress not only already existed in 1698, but had even undergone a further development at this time: the permission to wear a beard on condition of paying a duty for it, in witness of which beard tokens or "cheques", as they are named in the decree, were to be issued' [Чижов, с. 335].

The decree, however, leaves us with more puzzles than answers. Why did Peter order the minting of such an exact number of tokens (15,903)?<sup>11</sup> For whom were they intended? Was the decree implemented? Why was the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery ordered to implement it? If the decree existed not only on paper, why has only one token, whose authenticity is in any case still questioned by many experts, survived? Mikhail Demmeni, who first published the 1698 beard tokens decree, doubted whether it had been fully implemented [Деммени, с. 4]. I have also been unable to find any traces in the records of the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery of its having been implemented. There is no mention of the beard fee in the political case files for the period 1698–1704. On the contrary, there is some evidence that beard shaving was not obligatory even for courtiers at this time. Thus, in 1700, Grigorii Talitskii testified that the boyar prince Ivan Ivanovich Khovanskii had once asked him: 'They are shaving beards. What should I do if they shave my beard?' During his first interrogation, Khovanskii admitted he had indeed said this [РГАДА. Ф. 7. Оп. 1. Д. 1348. Л. 12 об.– 13]. It follows from his testimony that Khovanskii had continued to wear a beard. It is unlikely he was wearing a beard only because he had paid the tax. If he had paid it, why would he have been afraid that his beard could be shaved off at any moment?

The fact that even people in court circles wore beards in the years 1698–1704 is borne out, evidently, by the 1705 decree on beard shaving, which ordered that Moscow courtiers, in particular, should have their mustaches and beards shaved. If they refused, courtiers, military officers, and chancellery officials had to pay a 60-ruble yearly fee in exchange for beard tokens [ПСЗ. Т. 4. № 2015]. It is interesting that beard shaving is first mentioned in Zheliabuzhskii's diary only in 1704, although there are repeated mentions of the drafting and promulgation of the decree on dress in the entries for 1699–1700:

<sup>11</sup> I. V. Rudenko, a numismatist, convincingly accounted for the odd number of beard tokens in this document (15903 pieces): probably, this was the calculated number of 1.03 gram tokens that could be produced from one pood (16.38 kilograms) of copper. The only surviving beard token from 1698/1699 weighs 1.05 grams [Руденко, с. 16].

Иван Данилов сын Наумов на смотре бит батогами нещадно за то, что у него борода и усы не выбриты. И после смотрю им, воеводам, была сказка, чтоб у них впредь бород и усов не было, а у кого будет, и тем будет гнев [Желябужский, с. 346–347]<sup>12</sup>.

It transpires that until 1704, military servicemen could report for inspections wearing beards because there had been no special decrees to this effect. But at the same time, apparently, the authorities disapproved of the wearing of beards. Especially among military servicemen, wearing a beard was regarded as a sign of disloyalty to the tsar.

In this regard, it is also important to note that Prince Boris Kurakin mentions the reforms to dress and beard shaving in his autobiography. However, he writes about the 1700 decree on Hungarian dress in a chapter dealing with the events of the twenty-second year of his life, that is, 1697–1698:

Того ж года состоялся указ носить платье венгерское. И потом, спустя полгода, состоялся указ носить платье, мужское и женское, немецкое. И для того были выбраны по воротам целовальники, чтоб смотреть того, и с противников по указу брали пошлину деньгами, а также платье резали и драли. Однако ж чрез три году насилиу уставились [Куракин, с. 257]<sup>13</sup>.

I should note that there is some chronological inaccuracy in this part of Kurakin's autobiography: in this same chapter on 1697–1698, Kurakin discusses the introduction of stamped paper, the establishment of the Privy Chancellery under Nikita Zotov's leadership, and the Moscow fire of 1701. And yet he correctly dates the beard shaving decree to 1705:

Того же года указ состоялся брить бороды, и начали брить все во всем государстве. А будет кто не похочет брить, на год платить 30 рублей в казну [Куракин, с. 273]<sup>14</sup>.

Evaluating all this evidence, one is inclined to conclude that the 1698 beard tokens decree was not implemented, and that the general order to shave beards, despite the fact that courtiers were forced to shave regularly, should be dated only to 1705.

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<sup>12</sup> Ivan Danilov, Naumov's son, was mercilessly cudged at muster because his beard and mustache had not been shaved. And after the inspection, they, the military officers [*voevody*], were told that henceforth they should not have beards and mustaches, and those who did would be punished.

<sup>13</sup> The same year, the decree on Hungarian dress was issued. And then, six months later, the decree to wear German dress, men's and women's, was issued. To this end, tax collectors [*tseloval'niki*] were chosen to keep watch at the gates, and they took a fee in money from those who opposed the decree, and also cut and tore their clothing. However, they had barely established themselves after three years.

<sup>14</sup> The same year, a decree on beard shaving was issued, and they began shaving everyone throughout the realm. And those not willing to shave had to pay 30 rubles a year to the treasury.

However, there is yet another document that upsets all these conclusions. In 1858, Ustrialov published a report, dated 24 January 1701, sent by the Austrian envoy Pleyer to Emperor Leopold I, which includes the following passage: 'here a tax on beards has also been established [according to which] a nobleman or rich man can keep his beard for 50 rubles, that is, 100 reichsthalers, a commoner, for 2 grivnas, that is, 20 kopecks, and if he does not have this amount of money, his beard has to be cut. In my humble opinion (since many are willing to give up not just 50 rubles but their own heads if only to keep their beards) it will bring [the treasury] large sums of money' [Устрялов, т. 4, ч. 2, с. 552]<sup>15</sup>.

This document raises a number of questions. If the tax really had been established in 1701, why it is not mentioned elsewhere, such as Zheliabuzhskii's diary or Kurakin's autobiography? Why it is not mentioned in the records of the political investigations conducted by the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery? Why has not a single beard token from 1701 survived, while those from 1705 are quite common? [Чижев, с. 339; Руденко, с. 16–17, 106–121].

The records of the Moscow Police Chancellery, which handled the implementation of the decrees on European dress and beard shaving [ПСЗ. Т. 4. № 1999; № 2015.], would help in finally solving the riddle of when beard shaving was introduced in Russia. Unfortunately, however, its archive has been almost completely lost. RGADA has a mere 72 case files from the Moscow Police Chancellery, none of them containing information on our subject [Центральный государственный архив древних актов, т. 1, с. 55–56; РГАДА. Ф. 231. Оп. 1].

Happily, my search for Moscow Police Chancellery records in other archives has been more successful. On 14 March 1701, Peter the Great personally ordered the chancelleries to prepare monthly account statements and submit them to the Privy Chancellery [Милюков, с. 83]. A collection of these monthly and annual statements from the various chancelleries for the period 1701–1714, statements that were deposited in the archive of the Privy Chancellery, are now kept at RGADA in the Armory Chamber archive [РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 3]<sup>16</sup>. Among these records are the monthly and yearly statements of the Moscow Police Chancellery for 1701–1708 [РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 3. Кн. 26, 79, 112, 129, 145, 168]. They help us to trace how the decrees on European dress and beard shaving were implemented during this period.

A so-called caftan duty is mentioned among the *neokladnye* items of income in the account statements of the Moscow Police Chancellery for 1701–1704 [РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 3. Кн. 26. Л. 12, 14, 15, 17, 24, 26, 29, 33, 36 об., 39 об., 42 об., 45, 48, 51, 54, 57; Кн. 79. Л. 2 об., 7 об., 14 об., 21 об., 28 об., 36, 43 об., 49, 53 об., 59 об., 66, 72, 173, 180 об., 187, 198, 204, 211,

<sup>15</sup> I thank Petr Prudovskii for his help in translating this document.

<sup>16</sup> P.N. Miliukov based on Privy Chancellery documents stored in the State Archive of the Russian Empire (now RGADA f.19). He did not have access to the Armory Chamber account books I analyze here [Милюков, с. 80–81, 83].

217 о6., 225, 231 о6., 238 о6., 244, 250]. In some cases, this item is identified as a 'Caftan duty on non-stipulated [*neukaznyi*] dress'. In 1701, annual income from this source was 1,151 rubles [РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 3. Кн. 26. Л. 19 о6.]; in 1702, it dropped to 428 rubles [РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 3. Кн. 26. Л. 62]; in 1703, it increased to 464 rubles [РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 3. Кн. 79. Л. 82 о6.]; and in 1704, it increased even more, to 531 rubles [РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 3. Кн. 79. Л. 260]. In January 1705, a new irregular source of income appeared on the Moscow Police Chancellery's books: a duty 'on beards'. In 1705, the sum collected from the duty on beards was 4,040 rubles [РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 3. Кн. 112. Л. 86]. In the account statements, this income item is placed next to the item listed as 'caftan duty on non-stipulated dress' which, beginning in July 1705, was split into 'on non-stipulated dress in Moscow' and 'on dress as well, as reported from the towns' [РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 3. Кн. 112. Л. 3, 11 о6., 16 о6., 24 о6., 35 о6., 41 о6., 47 о6., 54 о6., 60 о6., 65 о6., 72–72 о6., 79 о6.]. In January 1706, the beard duty income item was likewise split into 'on beards in Moscow' and 'on beards, as reported from the towns'. Moreover, the latter was combined with the item 'duty on dress and saddles, as reported from the towns' [РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 3. Кн. 129. Л. 2 о6.]. For example, the November 1706 account statement contains the following entry:

Неокладных [статей дохода].

<...>

С неуказного платья московского сбору: 17 рублей 20 алтын.

З бород – 17 рублей 7 алтын 2 деньги.

По отпискам из городов с платья и з бород – 32 рубли 23 алтына 4 деньги [РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 3. Кн. 129. Л. 77 о6.]<sup>17</sup>.

In the annual account statement for 1706, however, all the items – the duties on dress, beards, and saddles in Moscow and the towns – were merged into a single item: 'On non-stipulated dress, beards, and saddles in Moscow and from the towns as dispatched: 4,670 rubles, 15 altyns, 2 dengas' [РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 3. Кн. 129. Л. 90].

Sent from the various chancelleries to the Privy Chancellery, the monthly account statements for 1701–06 unambiguously show that if the January 1701 beard duty decree mentioned in Pleyer's report really did exist, it was not implemented. Probably Pleyer reported rumors and hearsay about the possible introduction of a law on beard shaving rather than referring to a certifiable fact. In any case, the relevant income item for the duty on beards appeared only in 1705 in connection with implementation of the 16 January 1705 beard shaving decree. In addition to monthly account statements

<sup>17</sup> *Neokladnye* [income items]:

<...>

Duty on non-stipulated dress in Moscow: 17 rubles, 20 altyns

On beards: 17 rubles, 7 altyns, 2 dengas

On non-stipulated dress and beards, as reported from the towns: 32 rubles, 23 altyns, 4 dengas.

from the Moscow Police Chancellery of 1701–1708, which have undergone detailed scrutiny, I also studied the 1701 financial accounts of the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery, Military Chancellery, Foreign Affairs Chancellery (*Posol'skii prikaz*), Investigative Chancellery (*Sysknoi prikaz*), Monasterial Chancellery (*Monastyrskii prikaz*), Palace Chamber of Justice (*Dvortsovyi sudnyi prikaz*), the War Affairs Chancellery (*Prikaz voennykh del*), and the Great Treasury (*Prikaz Bol'shoi kazny*) (РГАДА. Ф. 396. Оп. 3. Кн. 1, 5–8, 11, 13, 16, 26, 31, 79, 112, 129, 145, 168). Income from a levy on beards is not mentioned in any of these sources.

\* \* \*

The answer to the question posed by this article's title cannot, evidently, be too simple. Our primary conclusion should be that beard shaving was gradually introduced in Russia. It was conceived by the Peter the Great, apparently, during his Grand Embassy or immediately afterwards. In late August–September 1698, men from Peter's inner circle underwent a comic beard shaving, a procedure described in Korb's diary and Guarient's reports. It was then that Peter hatched plans for prohibiting the wearing of beards among a portion of the populace. This is indicated by the tsar's October 1698 personal decree on the minting of 15,903 copper beard tokens, as preserved among the records of the Armory Chamber. This plan was not implemented, however. Beard tokens were not minted in this particular quantity, and a formal prohibition on wearing beards apparently did not exist until the decree of January 1705, although local orders on beard shaving for military servicemen could have been issued between 1701 and 1704.

Why did Peter decide not to implement his plan for comprehensive beard shaving in 1698? Perhaps he was aware that his Russian subjects were not ready for this decree. 1700, nevertheless, saw the promulgation of the decree on European dress, which was widely discussed. Despite the assumption made by some historians, we should note that the beard shaving decree was not issued at the same time as the decree on European dress. This is borne out by the records of the Preobrazhenskoe Chancellery and the account statements of the Moscow Police Chancellery.

At the same time, the period 1699–1704 witnessed the rapid spread of a fashion for beard shaving among military servicemen, townsmen, and even clergymen. Obviously, Peter had to have been aware of this, and by late 1704 he had already decided the ground had been sufficiently prepared for a general prohibition on wearing beards. Hence, in early 1705, a decree on beard shaving was issued that applied to all townspeople except the clergy. And yet Peter demonstrated a fair amount of flexibility on this point: when it became evident the decree had provoked great resentment in the towns of Siberia and the Volga, it was partially repealed [Akelev, p. 266–270].



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305, 325; Оп. 2. Стб. 484, 817, 819, 822, 884, 920, 934, 1021; Ф. 396. Оп. 1. Д. 33560; Оп. 3. Кн. 1, 5–8, 11, 13, 16, 26, 31, 79, 112, 129, 145, 168; Ф. 649. Оп. 1. Д. 1; Ф. 1154. Оп. 1. Д. 29.

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Illustration for the article:  
Evgeny Akelev. *When did Peter the Great Order Beards Shaved?*



Beard token with embossing. 1705